

# Problems in the Care & Conservation of Geological Collections: ROCKS

| PROBLEM           | ASSOCIATED SPECIMENS   | IDENTIFYING THE PROBLEM  | CARE & CONSERVATION   |
|-------------------|--|--|---|
| Radioactive rocks | Mostly granites; rocks with radioactive minerals attached                                | Check the specimen label for identification.<br>Use a Geiger counter (radiation meter) to check the levels of radiation. | As for radioactive minerals.<br>Large collections of granites may need to be ventilated to prevent build up of radon gas and its decay products.<br><br>Mark boxes or cupboards where these specimens are stored with warning labels.   |
| Rock dust         | Especially clay or silica rocks. Fibrous and friable specimens to be cut and/or cleaned. | Treat all rocks as potential dust hazards.   | Keep store areas clean esp. where large items are on open racks. Establish regular cleaning routines. Use vacuum with a microfilter for removing dust from specimens (be careful not to scrape or bash the specimen in the process).<br><br>Wear appropriately certified dust masks when cutting or grinding rocks or any activity which produces dust particles.<br><br>Specimens which "actively" produce dust, eg. friable specimens; should be kept in containers or sealed bags. Mark with warning labels.<br><br>Wear glasses & masks when handling friable or dust laden specimens.<br><br>Do not eat, drink or smoke in stores or areas where rocks are kept in the open. |
| Moving specimens  | Large objects  | Common sense !   | Set up procedures for moving heavy specimens.<br><br>Very large specimens should be kept on pallets to provide a movable base.<br><br>Avoid stairs if possible. Think about your route.<br><br>Manual handling & lifting course may be appropriate.   |